

Tips for Supervisor working with Remote Employees

As a supervisor, how can I make sure I'm managing remote employees effectively?

Remote work works best when employees and supervisors communicate clearly about expectations. The following checklist will help you establish a foundation for effective remote working, continued productivity, and service to the University community.

1. Review technology needs and resources.

Identify technology tools employees use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home. Also, ensure employees know how to access the appropriate technical support, should they need assistance.

- Does your team member need University equipment to work remotely, or can they use a personal computer?
- Does employee have VPN and remote access?
- Confirm that employees know how to set up call forwarding and how to access their voicemail from home.
- Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team, clarify expectations for online availability and confirm everyone has access to the technology tool(s) such as Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams and your department may have additional tools or resources.

Please visit FAU's OIT website for more information <http://www.fau.edu/oit/remote/>

2. Review work schedules.

Remote working can be confused with flex work. Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs.

3. Draft a work plan.

Review the questions below with employees and work through answers together.

- What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce any identified impacts?
- Are there cross-training opportunities to identify backup employees who can do critical work within or between departments? Plan for employee absences.
- What key processes have been identified for each area/or department? Will there be specific platform access necessary to fulfill these processes?
- What routine responsibilities/tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Proactively contact each other to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- Are there critical work activities that are vulnerable to the absence of a small number of key employees?
- Identify which teams or individuals have limited or no experience with remote work.
- What training will be necessary for remote work tools and technology?
- Identify and agree on strategic priorities during this time.
- Oftentimes employees experience fewer interruptions while working remotely. Are there any special projects, tasks, or online training that you can advance while working remotely?
- What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the temporary remote working arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology?

- What follow-up should occur due to postponements or cancellations? What circumstances require on-site attendance?
- Identify employees who may need special requirements or currently have work accommodations, and plan accordingly.
- Identify employees who will have access to the building, labs, or facilities.
- Be prepared to adjust plan as needed
- Provide resources or the process for technical support.

4. Make a communication and accountability plan.

Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely. Current performance standards are expected to be maintained by employees.

- If you normally make daily rounds to visit employees at their desks, you can give them a call during this period. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check-ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.
- Conduct regular check-ins. Consider starting each workday with a phone, video, or instant message chat. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption, and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly check-ins may be fine, so long as you are in contact frequently enough that your employees are in sync with you and/or with one another.
- Prepare an emergency communication plan. Identify key contacts (with backups), chains of communications for tracking business and employee statuses.

5. Be positive.

A positive attitude and a willingness to trust employees to effectively work remotely is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Working remotely presents an opportunity for supervisors to become better managers. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives—regardless of work arrangement. *The employee's completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation.* By focusing on the employee's work product, supervisors will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

6. Debrief after normal operations resume.

Employees and supervisors should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on the employee's work plan and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.